



# Preparing Your Family for Disasters

After a disaster, you and your family should be prepared to be on your own for at least three days. Emergency response teams may be overwhelmed and may not be able to provide immediate care to all who need it. Here are steps you can take now to help your family through any disaster.

## Things you can do to protect your family

- Choose a place for your family to meet after a disaster in case you are apart when a disaster happens.
- Choose a person outside the immediate area to contact if family members are separated. Your contact person should live far enough away that they are not involved in the same emergency.
- Know how you can contact your children at their school or daycare and when and where you can pick them up after a disaster. Designate others to pick up your child should you be unable to pick them up. Keep your child's emergency release card up to date.
- Put together an emergency supply kit for your home and workplace. If your child's school or daycare stores personal emergency kits, make one for your child to keep there.
- Know the locations of the nearest fire and police stations.
- Learn your community's warning signals, what they sound like, and what you should do when you hear them.
- Learn first aid and CPR.
- Learn how to shut off your water, gas, and electricity. Know where to find shut-off valves and switches.
- Keep a small amount of cash available. If the power is out, ATM machines will not operate.
- If you have a family member who does not speak English, prepare an emergency card written in English indicating that person's name, address, and any special needs such as medication or allergies. Tell that person to keep the card with them at all times.
- Conduct earthquake and fire drills once every six months.
- Make copies of your vital records and store them in a safe deposit box in another city or state. Make sure your originals are stored safely. Take photos and videotapes of your home and your valuables and keep them in your safe deposit box.
- Make sure family members know all the possible ways to exit your home. Keep all exits clear.
- Make sure all family members know about your plan. Give emergency information to babysitters or other care-givers.

## Things you can do to protect your pets

- Store enough food and water to last at least three days for each pet.
- Prepare an emergency kit for your pet. The kit should include: an unbreakable dish, medications and instructions, a leash or pet carrier, and your pet's veterinary records.
- Consider having a permanent microchip implanted in your pet; this ID cannot be lost or removed. See your veterinarian for more information.
- Make arrangements for your pets if you must evacuate after a disaster. Remember, pets are not allowed in shelters. Leave your pets in a secure place with ample water and food. If possible, return daily to check on your pets until you can return to your home permanently.

## WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT



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This fact sheet is part of the *Disaster Preparation Handbook 2004* prepared by the Washington State Department of Health and the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division.